

This positive step was tempered by the fact that in a number of cases the quotas the EC set for itself for 1990 did not represent a significant reduction from actual catches for 1989. However, there were three important stocks where these quotas did represent significant reductions from 1989 catches: Southern Grand Banks (3NO) cod, Grand Banks (3LNO) American plaice and Grand Banks (3LNO) yellowtail flounder. The total of the EC's unilateral quotas for these stocks was 500 t above the quotas set for the EC by NAFO.

This improvement was contrasted with the problems that still remained: First, the EC intended to take 32,000 t of northern cod in the face of a NAFO moratorium on catches outside 200 miles; second, the EC again was opting out of all important NAFO quota decisions and setting its own higher quotas for 1990; and, third, Canadian fishermen and plant workers faced further severe difficulties in part because of continued overfishing outside 200 miles. As Joe Clark said at the time, the EC took a step in the right direction, but there was still a long way to go.

The fishing industry also raised two fundamental concerns. Was there not a serious credibility gap regarding EC quotas, given the limited enforcement capability deployed by the EC with respect to its own vessels outside 200 miles? And, weren't non-NAFO fleets, especially those operating under flags of convenience from places like Panama, a serious and growing part of the overfishing problem? The answer to these questions was yes.

This was the situation that faced Mr. Valcourt, Mr. Clark and me as we carried forward the overfishing issue in early 1990. In April 1990, Mr. Valcourt and I met with the President of the Council of Fisheries Ministers, Irish Fisheries Minister John Wilson and then with Commissioner Marin. We discussed with both Ministers the very serious situation relating to northern cod, drawing on the report of the Harris Review Panel. We also laid the groundwork for Commissioner Marin's visit to Ottawa in May.

On May 10, Mr. Valcourt and I met throughout the day in Ottawa with Mr. Marin, meeting with the Prime Minister to conclude our discussions. After meeting with the Prime Minister, Commissioner Marin said (through an interpreter), "The European Community has decided that resource conservation in terms of fish stocks should become the core of its fishing policy." He added, "Positions taken by Canada and the EC should very soon meet."